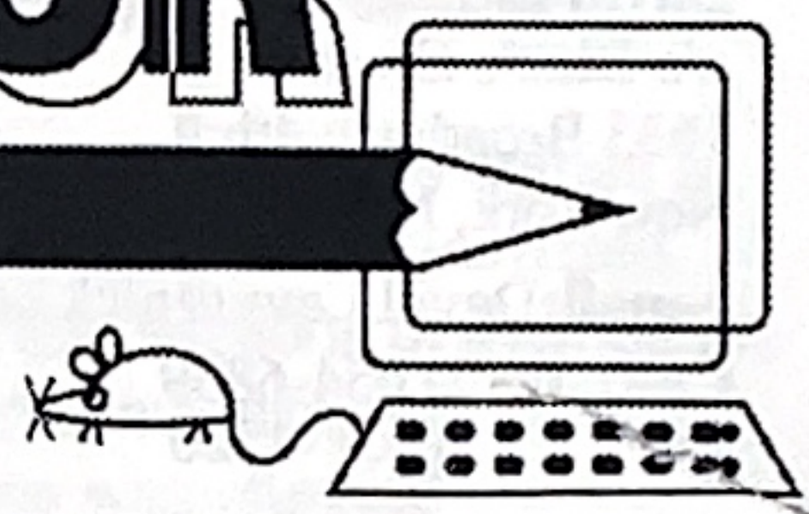
ASIFA EAST
The International Animated Film Society

ANYMATOR

April 2001 Issue



ASIFA EAST April Event

A Screening of "The Four Poster"

MONDAY, APRIL 23, 2001, 7 pm

School of Visual Arts

209 E. 23rd Street

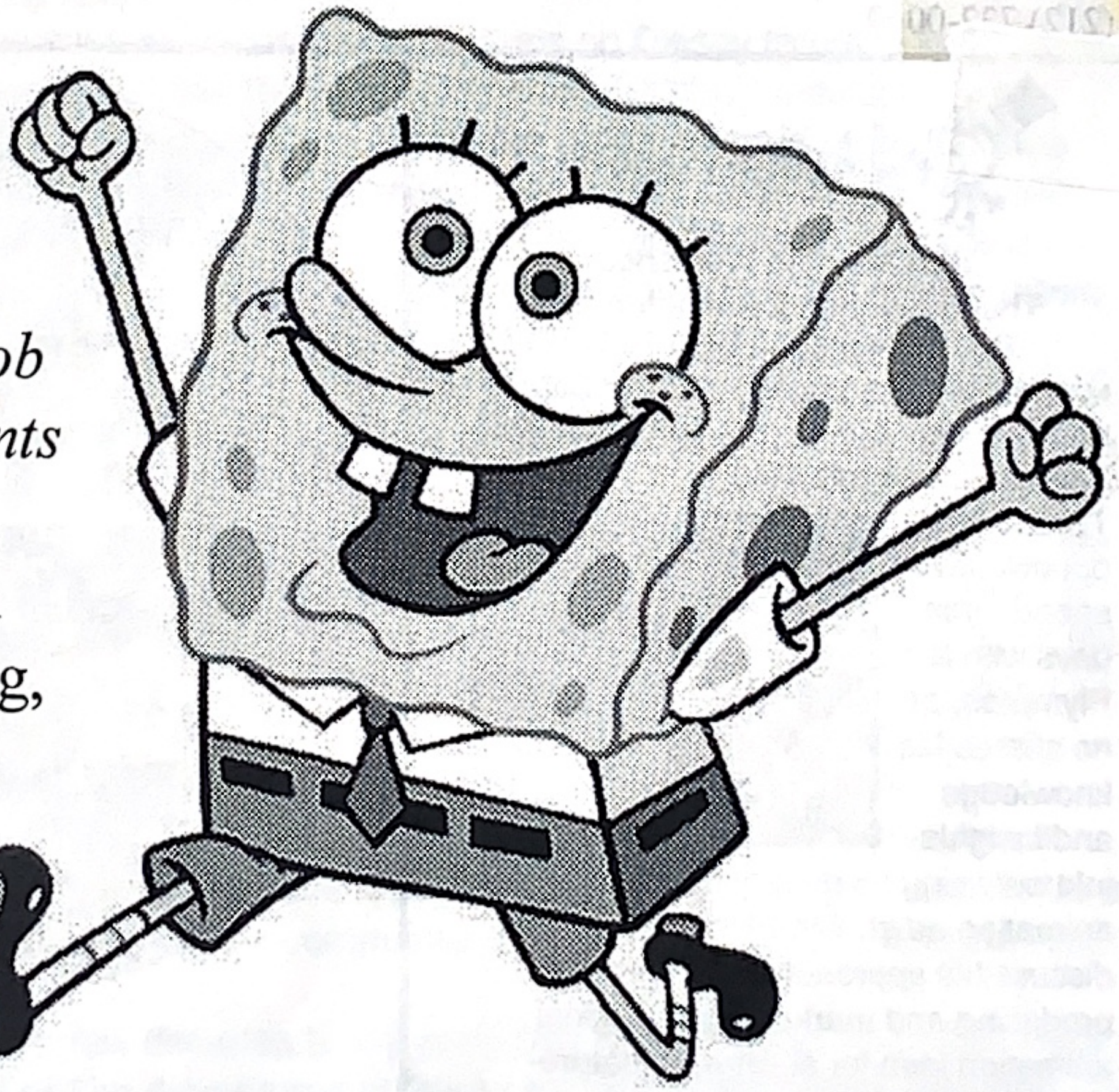
(bet. 2nd and 3rd Aves.)

ROOM 502 (5th Floor)

THE FOUR POSTER (1952)

Director	Irving Reis
Animation Director	John Hubley
Starring	Rex Harrison
	Lilli Palmer
Animators	Art Babbitt
	Lou Keller
Layout & BG's	Paul Julian
Music	Dmitri Tiomkin

Q & A
with
SpongeBob SquarePants
creator,
Stephen
Hillenburg,
inside !



ASIFA East

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Mon - Wed , June 25-27 Call :
Hours : 10am - 4pm (212) 592-2050
3 sessions; no credit; $450

This is a rare opportunity to spend three days with Bill Plympton, as he shares his knowledge and insights into surviving as an independent animation artist. Mr. Plympton will discuss his approach to conceiving, producing and marketing an original animation idea for short-and feature-length animation projects.

FREE LIFE DRAWING CLASSES

For ASIFA-East members and students at SVA 141 W. 21st St. Room 603 C From 7:00-10:00PM on Thursday nights from Now - April 26

Any questions?
Contact Toni Tysen
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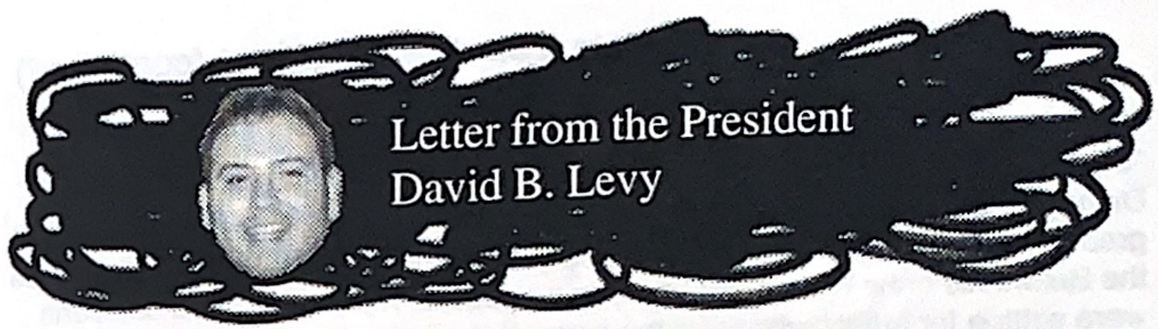


Letter from the President
David B. Levy

While thumbing through my March 26th New York Magazine, I came across a tidbit covering a test screening for the upcoming Dreamworks/PDI animated feature, "Shrek". The angle of this story was that certain sections or themes in the film are digs at Disney storytelling and theme parks including a "It's a Small World" robotic parody. Reportedly, the audience was stunned and Jeffrey Katzenberg (in attendance) was grinning ear to ear, having effectively thrown a dig at his former employer. Should this matter to anyone?

I don't know why its newsworthy that a former shepherd of the Disney comeback trail (with such films to his credit as "Beauty and the Beast", "Little Mermaid", Aladdin" and "The Lion King") is razzing his ex-employer. Katzenberg and his partners at DreamWorks have so far only imitated Disney in their 2D animated films "Prince of Egypt" and "The Road to Eldorado". These films didn't deviate much from the Disney mold that they are supposedly attacking in "Shrek". I will certainly reserve my final opinion on this matter until I actually see the film.

However, anyone looking for great send-ups on Disney through the mists of time should stop first at the 1933 Fleischer short "Bimbo's Initiation". The Fleischer's were in a position to do a genuine comment on Disney because their aesthetic approach to cartoon making were very different from Disney. For most of the 1930's, the Fleischer studio provided the most successful alternative to the Disney mind-set. Fleischer cartoons depicted a gritty urban environment. The themes were much more adult, the gags more risky (or risqué) and the pacing was much quicker than anything going on at Disney. The Disney cartoons of this time mostly depicted middle America and farm-themed stories.

The jab at Disney in "Bimbo's Initiation" is such an inside joke that its easy to miss. In the early 1930s (before Disney soured upon the idea of hiring NY trained animators/cartoonists), Disney recruiting agents would show up on the bottom floor of the Fleischer studio and attempt to pull employees right out from under the nose of Max and Dave. At the start of this classic cartoon, Bimbo happily walks along a street until he falls underground through a manhole trap set by a Mickey Mouse look-a-like. What follows is a surreal journey with bizarre robed figures terrorizing Bimbo by chanting "Want to be a member?" This was in part a commentary on the early Disney machine and monopoly.

Fast forward a few decades to the early 60s to Jay Ward's Fractured Fairy Tales segment of The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle show, featuring

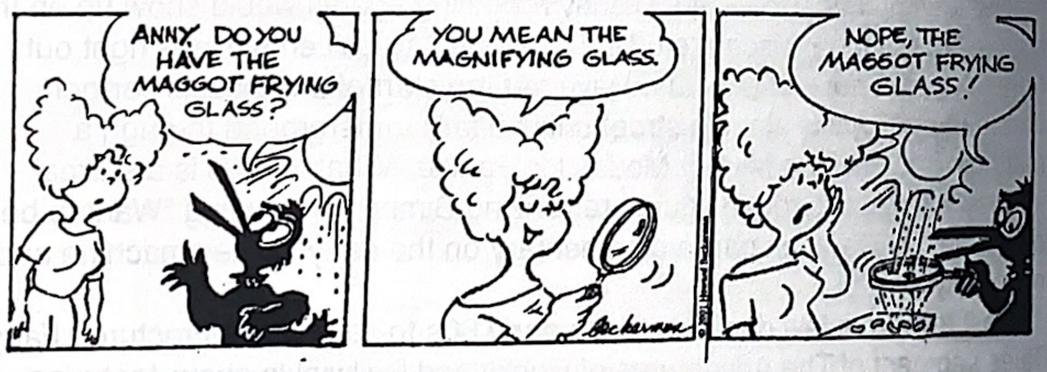
Letter from the President (continued)

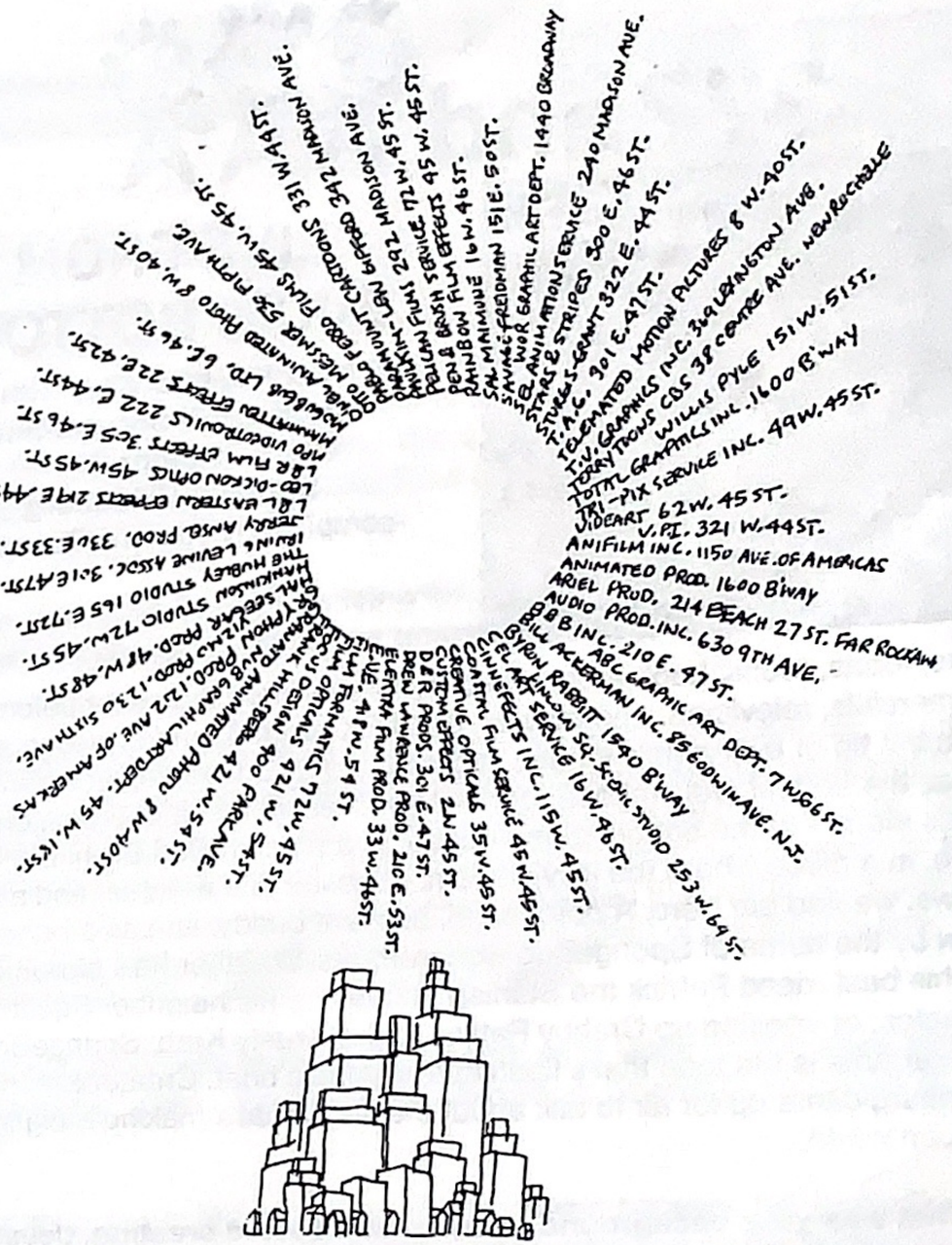
"Sleeping Beauty Land". In this cutting commentary on the still- new DisneyLand theme park, Ward and his co-horts reduced Disney to a portrait of greed, exploitation and shrewd capitalism. This attack was significant because the Bullwinkle crew were anti-Disney in just about every way. Ward cartoons were written for adults who read the newspaper everyday. Most Bullwinkle stories were a thinly disguised representation of the contemporary state of the world, warts (or Wards) and all. The vast majority of Disney product, then and now, has been a idealistic environment where the threats were fantastical. In short, in Disney lore, the danger is Monstro the Giant Whale. In Ward's world, the H Bomb and the cold war provide the danger. To top it off, the aesthetic of the Bullwinkle show was distinctly non-Disney in its simplified graphics and yes, numerous glaringly obvious production mistakes. The point of the Ward cartoons, however, were always the script and the soundtracks.

In the modern period we have such Disney razzing gems as The Simpson's episode, in which a Mary Poppins-like flying nanny is driven to drink by America's favorite dysfunctional family. Yes, one could argue that Cinderella came from a dysfunctional family too, but that dysfunctional family was not blood related. There a great schism between having a step family that hates you and having your whole biological family in shock therapy. In the same vein, but much harsher, is the last South Park Christmas special, in which Mr. Hankey teaches his family (all talking turds) about their important place in the eco-system as he sings "The Circle of Poo", effectively smearing The Lion King's "Circle of Life".

In conclusion, this was not written out of disrespect for Disney animation. I am a huge fan of the best of their work. I thought it might be interesting to point out that slinging mud at the mouse is an old pre-occupation. It should not be attempted by a studio that also hires Elton John to sing in their movies.

ANNY MATOR by Howard Beckerman

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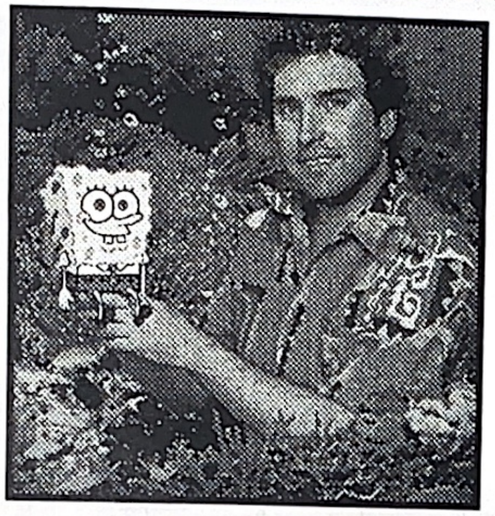
ZOOMS

??? and AAA



LIVE FROM BIKINI BOTTOM

A Q & A Interview with *SpongeBob SquarePants* creator, Stephen Hillenburg

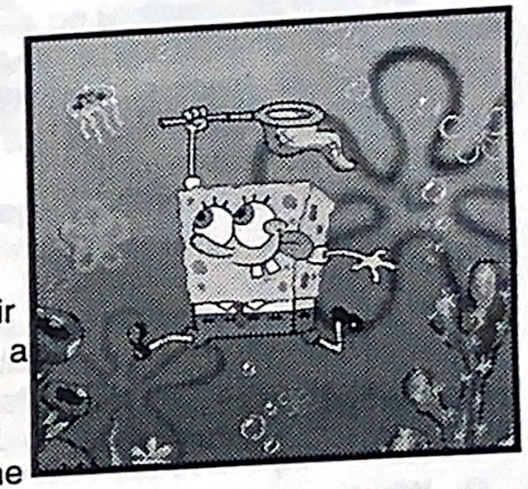
-compiled by your pal Dave Levy

Toons, toons, toons. Look around and you'll see more than ever before in commercials, television, and movies. But ASK around, and one toon seems to be on the tip of everyone's tongue. It comes up as a favorite, as a don't-miss, and as the hottest (yet wettest) toon in town. Yes, in a sea of toons, one toon stands alone - at the bottom of the ocean, in a place called Bikini Bottom. There, in a place where the jellyfish jam, a lobster lifts weights, and a snail meows, we find our hero. A porous pal, buoyant buddy, and all around yellow fellow by the name of SpongeBob SquarePants. Whether he's blowing bubbles with his best friend Patrick the Starfish, harassing his neighbor Squidward Tentacles, or cooking up Crabby Patties at the Krusty Krab, SpongeBob SquarePants is the toon that's floating everyone's boat. Creator Stephen Hillenburg came up for air to talk about the show that's making a big splash in the toon world.

Q: What was your background in animation before creating, developing and producing Spongebob?

A: I attended CalArts and participated in the Experimental Animation graduate program under Jules Engel. During this time, I produced two animated films, 'The Green Beret' (a short involving a GirlScout with enormous hands) and 'Wormholes' (a short about a fly landing on a watch in 'relativityland'), both of which toured the festival scene. I also created another film of straight ahead animation titled 'Animation Diary' which consisted of 365 drawings (one drawing drawn per day for the year 1991). After graduating, I was hired to work on the Nickelodeon series 'Rocko's Modern Life'. I directed for three seasons and was promoted to Creative Director for the fourth season.

Q: What pitch materials did you use to "sell" Spongebob to Nickelodeon?



A: I created a bible and a few paintings to explain the characters and their world. To supplement this, I sculpted SpongeBob, Patrick and Squidward and put them in an aquarium where they were propelled by an air pump. I also recorded a temp theme song on a small tape recorder and mounted it inside a conch shell with a mercury switch. The song would play whenever the shell was lifted to the ear. I was also nude.

Q: How much did the initial vision for Spongebob change or evolve from the original concept? Did minor characters develop into more prominent roles?

A: Originally I wanted the show to focus on this innocent, optimistic, overly enthusiastic, sometimes odd and even magical character (SpongeBob) living this nautical fantasy world. I think we've pretty much stayed on course. The key has been finding stories where either SpongeBob prevails innocently or where his innocence causes a conflict for himself. I wanted the overall sensibility of the world to be wild and surreal, yet, have logic. Most of the original cast remains with no real change in their importance.

Q: How did you come to meet the people who work on the show like Derek Drymon, Aaron Springer, Mr. Lawrence, Sherm Cohen, and Paul Tibbitt?

A: I'm lucky, I guess! There is a direct relationship between the success of this show and my immensely creative staff. These guys and all the other crew members are hard to find and hard to replace. A few people (Derek Drymon, for example) worked on 'Rocko'. Most of the people I find, are through word of mouth. You have somebody on the staff you like and trust, they recommend someone they think would fit in nicely on the show. Often you're searching for someone that has the right sensibility and the appropriate sense of humor (someone who 'gets it').

Q: What, if any, roles have you taken on in producing SpongeBob that you don't enjoy?

A: Managing people is an essential part of producing a show, but can be tiring. I like going to work and being creative. When the other stuff gets in the way, it's a drag.

??? and AAA Live From Bikini Bottom (continued)

Q: Did you cast the show yourself? Do you ever do any VOs on the show?

A: Donna Grillo and I cast the show. I would explain to Donna the specific voices I had in mind for each character and she would recommend a list of candidates. I did the voice of 'Potty' the parrot in the 'Patchy the Pirate' live action segments. Anybody can do a parrot.

Q: What's your personal favorite SB episode to date and why?

A: Being so close to the project it's impossible for me to have a favorite. I think the shows get better and better. The characters become more developed, the animation more consistent.

Q: Were SpongeBob's nocturnal dream traveling adventures at least partially inspired by the Sour Puss and Gandy cartoons made at Terrytoons in the early 1940s?

A: I'm not sure. That was an idea Doug Lawrence hatched.

Q: The character of Bubble Bass and Spongebob seem to have a Jerry and Newman relationship, a-la Seinfeld. What films, television shows, comics...etc, do you draw creative inspiration from?

A: For this particular series, anything that deals with 'Candide'-like innocence: Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Laurel and Hardy, Pee-Wee, the Muppets, movies like 'My Life as a Dog' or 'A Christmas Story', also Popeye, Beany and Cecil, Krazy Kat, Dr.Seuss, Yellow Submarine, and Calvin and Hobbes. I should mention that a great deal of the inspiration for the series came from my interest in marine biology and surf culture.

Q: Spongebob draws a large adult following. Are you surprised that adults have taken to your show?

A: Yes and no. It is Saturday am TV, but since we write things that make us laugh, one could assume other adults would also find the show amusing. We definitely don't pander to kids...but, we also try not to write over their heads. I was more surprised to hear about college students playing drinking games while watching 'Blue's Clues'.

Q: Some entire episodes of SpongeBob can be understood with the sound turned off....for instance, the episode in which SpongeBob delights in the limitless joys of a simple piece of paper. How do you balance the visual to verbal content of the show from each episode's inception?

A: What probably helps most here is reviewing all drafts of the story (after the outline stage) either as a storyboard or an animatic and doing visual and verbal rewrites simultaneously.

Q: Several episodes of SpongeBob feature terrific song segments that are woven effectively into the plot lines, such as the "friendship song" sung by Plankton and SB, the "ripped my pants" song and Sandy's "wish I was back in Texas". Did the song ideas evolve out of the plot lines or did the plot lines evolve out of the song ideas?

A: All the above songs were written after the plot was determined.

Q: There is an LA based group of artists that draw heavily upon cartoon (and animation) imagery in their work (Mike Kelley, Paul McCarthy, etc.) Have these artists or any other contemporary art world influences inspired SpongeBob in any way?

A: I was at this museum once that had a room full of cartoony Mike Kelley drawings that were all really bizarre. A group of elementary kids, led by a museum docent, entered the room and got really excited about the drawings. A few were examining this depiction of Abe Lincoln with brain waves and others were pointing at this one drawing of a goose biting a little boy on the penis. The docent was clearly uncomfortable and quickly ushered them out of the room (against their will) to the next exhibit. I've always wanted SpongeBob to be that compelling.

Q: Did you experience any resistance from "the network" in incorporating live-action elements into SB? (Like in "The Suds" episode when the hand reaches in and grabs the characters and washes them out)

A: No. They were a little worried about 'Patchy the Pirate', though.

Q: How do you maintain the high quality look of your show when dealing with an overseas studio handling the animation?

A: Our overseas studio is Rough Draft. They are really the best studio in Korea for cartoony animation. Sure there's communication barriers, but those guys work really hard and have some talented cartoonists on board. Also, they are quite familiar with other Nickelodeon shows, such as 'Ren and Stimpy' and 'Rocko's Modern Life', where layouts were done from detailed storyboards.

??? and AAA Live From Bikini Bottom (continued)

Q: Many of the new wave of television cartoons including Courage the Cowardly Dog, Power Puff Girls and your show feature the storyboard credit prominently before each cartoon, alongside the director's name. What is the role of storyboard artists on Spongebob? In addition to their work on boards, do they make major writing and directorial contributions to the show?

A: On SpongeBob, a writing team writes the premise and then a Director and Storyboard artist 'team' writes the episode in 'comic' or storyboard form. We do not storyboard from scripts.

Q: The story ideas for SpongeBob are very simple, well told, entertaining and full of great little touches like the poor fish who keeps getting hit by the anchor toss in the muscle beach competition in the episode where SpongeBob gets fake muscle arms. At what point do the smaller details that end up contributing so much to the overall effect get into your show? Where do these ideas come from? Do you ever wonder if one more gag or one less gag could make or break a sequence?

A: Our overall philosophy has been 'keep it simple'. Try to find humor in a simple situation (that hopefully reaches absurd proportions). Put the characters together and watch what happens...you know, like red ants and black ants. We are only doing eleven minute stories so there are not a lot of subplots. Sometimes we will build an entire act around one silly concept. SpongeBob and Patrick both have candy bars. Patrick is so stupid that he forgets that he has just eaten his and believes the one SpongeBob holds was his. SpongeBob is now a thief. The humor should always come from character. The ideas come from everywhere and anyone. Things like childhood memories. When developing stories, we often play non-linear thinking exercises (like pulling words out of a hat and writing a situation inspired by the word). Ultimately the ideas that stick are the ones that consistently make everyone laugh. As far as the number of gags goes, I definitely think the pacing of a section can be bogged down by too many jokes.

Q: What animated shows, if any, do you measure your work on Spongebob against or consider your creative competition?

A: 'Ren and Stimpy' and 'The Simpsons' raised the bar for all TV animation. Those shows really inspired us to try to do something memorable or maybe even groundbreaking. At they same time, we are fighting hard to not copy them. We're always asking 'How can we not be like those shows?'

Q: What independent animators/animated films do you admire?

A: Jules Engel. He's singlehandedly taught and inspired countless independent animators. His age is a mystery. Paul Driessen. When I was thirteen I went to a Tournee of Animation and saw 'The Killing of an Egg'. That film made a lasting impression on me. Richard Condie. 'The Big Snit' has got to be one of the greatest indies ever.

Q: If you had three wishes, what would they be?

A:
1. Pleasure for all things living and non-living.
2. To never have to 'high five' an industry executive.
3. That they resume production of 'Tombow' 2B pencil

Many thanks to Stephen Hillenburg for going that extra 'nautical mile' to answer our questions! Thanks also to the many people who contributed to this interview.

My Cynicism and My Hope

by Michael Sporn

VIEW POINT AIEM

In writing notes for the film, THE FOUR POSTER, I realized how cynical I've become. I once believed in the infinite power of the medium of animation to do anything, limited only by the minds of the creators (and the forces of the financiers). I guess I still believe in the same power of animation, but I feel pretty confident the greatness I expected isn't going to happen – at least, not in my lifetime.

In the 70's when I started in animation, jobs were scarce. The old guard was leaving – they were unhappy with the limited animation of Hanna Barbera and what they felt was soft porn in Ralph Bakshi's attempt to be "adult". Disney was not "in", and there wasn't much happening there, anyway. Obviously, this has all changed. Animation is everywhere; lots of jobs have been created, and The Cartoon Network is still one of the most profitable cable franchises. 13 animated features will be released in the US in this next year all vying for a new Academy Award category for Best Animated Feature. One would think I'd be ecstatic; but I'm not.

Back in the good old days – the days before I was born – animation did a lot. It was designed, drawn and directed to act. The word animation actually comes from the latin word "animus" which means "soul". Characters in pre-ROBIN HOOD Disney features, or in pre-60's WB shorts, or in UPA's limited animation, or even in the early Hanna Barbera all had "souls". They were truly alive despite the fact that they were drawn. Even the most abstract of Hubley's characters drawn in the fifties and sixties acts with more humanity than any recent Disney character. It's hard to see, sometimes, but it isn't hard to feel. Think of Dumbo running through the legs of his mother playing hide-and-seek. Think of the eyes of Cinderella's stepmother coming forward, slowly, toward Cinderella, when she realizes the dress is made of scraps from the stepsisters' dresses. Think of Huckleberry Hound doing anything with only half a dozen drawings. Or Gerald McBoing Boing running to catch the train with his little hobo bag over his shoulder.

In THE FOUR POSTER limited animation graphics gives us an outside view of the world of a married live-action couple on screen. Their emotional life is dramatized in animation using only music as soundtrack. The artists capture birth, death, joy and sadness with only their pencils. Compare that to the computerized versions of ROCKY & BULLWINKLE in the overblown monstrosity of a feature, or think of any part of MONKEYBONE's frenzied activity, or think of the new hilarious sitcom, THE OBLONGS, where all principal characters have to be physically impaired humans to keep us laughing. When did the adult in "adult animation" become adolescent? Was it with FRITZ THE CAT or when the cartoon loving baby boomers grew up?

How did STAR WARS affect those generations of people who became sci-fi freaks and oblivious to past literature – both filmed and written? The positive is in THE SIMPSONS which keeps telling funny stories but has most recently depended on absurd gags to drive the show rather than its characters. Or think of PRINCE OF EGYPT where Dreamworks tried to do something a little different and threw a lot of money into it, trying. (Their next feature ROAD TO EL DORADO tried only to outdo the even more moronic and vastly more cynical EMPEROR'S NEW GROOVE in telling a story about the Andes.) Where we go from here not only lies in the hands of the financiers but in the artists as well. The hopeful sign comes from the Oscar winning short, FATHER AND DAUGHTER. A tale well and beautifully told by Michael Dudok de Wit. Perhaps, someone from Dreamworks or Disney was in the audience and took a bit of a lesson from it.

Animators making shorts, meanwhile, have to try to learn not to make their independently financed shorts as an unsuccessful audition piece for The Cartoon Network, but rather to try only to create the best possible film they can. Say something and make your characters, even if they're abstract, have "souls". Or at least try.

MONDAY, APRIL 23, 2001, 7 pm
School of Visual Arts
209 E. 23rd Street
(bet. 2nd and 3rd Aves.)
ROOM 502 (5th Floor)

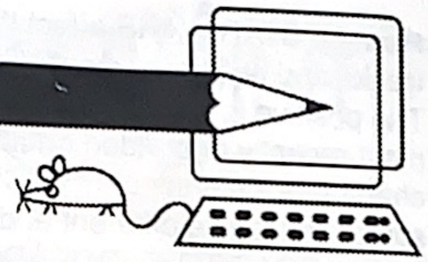
Screening :**"The Four Poster"**

THE FOUR POSTER (1952) is a filmed adaptation of a theatrical two-person play brought to life by animation. The stunt behind the play was that a married couple entered a bedroom, with a four poster bed, on their wedding night. Through a number of scenes, they live out their entire married life – never outside the confines of the bedroom. The film cleverly used animation by John Hubley, at UPA, to open up the play and go out into the world. The animation was profound and moving (certainly more so than the live-action), its design was new and brilliant (sometimes resembling Hubley's ROOTY TOOT TOOT, other times looking like future Hubley films), and its execution was superior to almost anything on the animation circuit at the time. (So superior was it, that some animators in Zagreb, Yugoslavia confiscated a print circulating there and studied it for weeks, running the animation sequences over and over. The end result was the creation of the Zagreb animation studio.)

The film is out of circulation. You can't get it on video, you don't see it in retrospective screenings, and you won't see it on TV. (This is possibly the only film produced by the Stanley Kramer not shown as part of TCM's retrospective to the late film maker.) Animation lovers shouldn't miss this film of rare significance to the history of the medium. You can see what animators could do with the medium 50 years ago (without help from a computer) and are not doing now. Maybe someone will be inspired.

(The Four Poster will be screened in old fashioned 16mm. It's a B&W TV print without commercials. This means they've been cut out and the print has lots of splices. Hopefully we'll have one of the new-fangled projectors that beautifully passes over splices. If not it'll be an old-fashioned kind of screening with breaks to fix the film! A chance to socialize during the film.)

CRUNCHYWORLD



by Charles Danziger
charles@danziger.com

What is a Japanese-speaking, New York based "art lawyer" doing creating animation for the internet? The answer is the story of how I got involved in computer animation, and how this unlikely hobby became a passion and, it now seems, a second new profession.

I had been drawing for years before internet-based animation was even remotely on my radar screen--indeed, before the internet was even a gleam in Al Gore's eye. I illustrated school yearbooks and newspapers, created miscellaneous art work while I was studying art history at Yale, and indulged in endless doodling while I slogged through law school. In fact, my passion for drawing led me to study the Japanese language, with its thousands of intricate and beautiful characters.

Then, while I was working as an in-house lawyer for The Museum of Modern Art (from 1990-1993), I received an offer to write and illustrate a book of my own drawings and essays about life in Japan, where I had studied and worked as an attorney. I created the drawings in pen and ink, a medium which was once favored by artists everywhere.

Luckily, the book (called "The American Who Couldn't Say Noh" in hardcover and "Japan for Starters" in paperback) was well received and led to another offer, this time to create animation for Japanese television.

Soon I found myself showing my short, animated cartoons every week for a year on a primetime national television show in Japan, broadcast by NHK. I created those cartoons with Director software using my trusty stylus and Wacom tablet; the production studio did the rest. The hardest part was getting used to the hand-eye coordination involved in drawing on an electronic pad while images appeared on a separate screen on my Macintosh computer. The cartoons were actually short "lead-ins" to segments on the television show that I hosted in Japanese called "Danziger's Corner."

Once the Japanese television show came to an end, I tried to take the next step in developing my skills as an animator and in having my animation viewed by the largest audience possible. Since breaking into television animation in the U.S. seemed a long shot, I set my sights on the internet, and I taught myself FLASH (with the help of some excellent tutors). Since I am basically unable to program an answering machine or use my VCR at home, it is a minor miracle that I was actually able to master FLASH, a program to which I am now addicted.

FLASH, and the internet, seems to suit my artistic style perfectly: my drawings tend to be simple and colorful (although my humor often has an ironic edge to it), which means that my images can download quickly and easily.

For a while, I worked on a number of freelance, FLASH-based projects (including a prototype for a website for a major cultural institution in New York), all the while taking care of my legal clients. (In this connection, I owe a huge and ongoing debt of gratitude to my law partner – who also happens to be my brother – who took the laboring oar in the law firm so that I could keep up my artistic endeavors.)

About 18 months ago, I used FLASH to develop and hand-draw my own animated greeting card site, www.crunchyworld.com, which includes about 400 cards for various occasions. Fortunately, a number of internet sites were interested in licensing these images, and I finally struck a deal with americangreetings.com. This offer was appealing since American Greetings is the world's largest greeting card company and its greeting card site (which is free) powers AOL Greetings and Lycos Ecards, among others. Currently, I show over 50 animated cards (with music) on americangreetings.com under the heading "Crunchyworld."

My next step is to show short, animated, FLASH-based cartoons using my Crunchyworld characters, and there is interest among both U.S.-based and Japanese-based groups. (In Japan, a fruitful venue for internet-based animation is actually the cellular telephone, which transmits such images to a large audience). While developing these cartoons, I continue to study and work with computer experts, a wonderful animation professor, and some very talented young musicians. There is no question, however, that selling internet-based animation in the current market is a more uphill battle than, say, a year ago.

Since I was not traditionally trained as an animator, one of the challenges and pleasures of exploring animation is trying to play "catch-up" in the field, getting to know my fellow animators, and learning about their work. In this connection, ASIFA-East has been an invaluable resource. I am also trying to give something back to the animation community by travelling to high schools and introducing students to this exciting art form.

In short, I have had the best of two worlds: our law firm continues to thrive while animation has opened up a whole new world of creative possibilities for me.

Pencil Tests Are Fun With Flipbook

by Howard Beckerman

The easiest way to check the potential of a stack of animated drawings is to flip them. But if you must see how they will look when screened, you shoot a pencil test. Until the late 1970s drawings were photographed onto film. The film was sent to a lab for overnight processing or, for short tests, the strip of exposed film was cut from the roll in total darkness and summarily dumped into a tray and developed. Either it was then threaded into a machine for viewing. With the introduction of single frame videotape recording, animation and electronics merged, the Lyon lay down with Lamb, so to speak, to create a system that recorded a frame-at-a-time and played it back at the standard 24 frames per second. There was also digital apparatus that did the job minus the tape, relying on clever discs or chips. Of this type of machine the Quick Action Recorder was the most commonly used, especially outside the United States. A more compact version of this idea appeared a few years ago, designed to fit into a lunch box. With the tuna fish sandwiches removed and the chocolate chip cookies eaten, the unit was dubbed, not surprisingly, The Lunch Box. The advantage of the digital pencil test devices is that you see the results immediately, backwards or forwards, at varying speeds and, at the touch of a button, individual frames are revised. But the expense is steep. Enter ambidextrous computers capable of every trick and readily available. But here too there's a catch. Animation programs that include coloring and snazzy effects along with pencil test features cost even more. One solution has been to order from the rich Adobe menu. By combining one program from Group A with one or two programs from Group B and then assigning the frames a proper order you can, if you haven't forgotten what you were trying to do in the first place, view your drawings in motion. But now something new has happened, a program, moderate in cost that does pencil tests with little fuss and does all the things that the expensive stuff offers. It's so simple that the whole process is easily managed and actually fun to do. The program is called Flipbook and costs under $500. There is also a price for students that is considerably less. What I like about Flipbook, besides the friendly price, is that you just set the amount of frames, one's, two's, three's, scan or digitize your drawings and the program arranges them automatically. Then, just click on the button and watch your animation run. Since pencil tests are generally in black-and-white Flipbook records them that way. This suits me just fine. All I was looking for was something that did 24 frames per second PT's, no bells and whistles please. But the program allows for running your tests in sound sync, and there is a color version and a paint program to be released in May. Flipbook can be output to a VCR or published in AVI, QuickTime and Flash. At present Flipbook is made just for PC, but a Mac version is on the way. Check their website to download a usable sample: www.digicelinc.com or write to Kent Braun at 1 Lanterna Aliso Viejo, CA 92656, or call (949) 916-8767 or e-mail to info@digicelinc.com Flipbook is for animators!

ANNOUNCEMENT

ASIFA Opens Colorado Chapter (January 20, 2001)

ASIFA-Colorado was officially inaugurated and celebrated on January 19, 2001 with a party, which brought together an audience of over 120 of animators, students and animation enthusiasts. The event included an exciting show of animation work created by a wide variety of animation styles and techniques by artists from around the world.

Heading up ASIFA's newest chapter is Edward Bakst, award-winning master animator and designer/director as well as the founding chair of the new animation department at Rocky Mountain College of Art & Design.

"The aim of our new organization is to bring together animation artists, students and those passionate about our art, not just from within Colorado but also from all of the surrounding states. There exists here a creative void and a certain sense of alienation and a lack of creative interactively associated with the main metropolitan centers such as Los Angeles or New York City" says Bakst, himself is a very recent transplant from New York City. "This, in turn, offers a great opportunity for our new organization not to only satisfy the existing hunger but also to inspire and stimulate creative activity and bring about a rebirth of the art of animation within this region of America". ASIFA-Colorado's true to form mantra is visible in the cast of visiting international artists and scholars who expose animation practitioners, students or enthusiasts to a variety of attitudes, power of imagination styles, diverse creative ideas, and different philosophies on the art of animation throughout the world.

Thanks to a partnership with the Rocky Mountain College of Art & Design and its animation department, ASIFA-Colorado is able to offer its members an opportunity for creative growth through exposure to foreign cultures and an exchange of ideas between international animators and scholars who come to RMCAD, invited by Bakst to participate in the animation department, as either visiting scholars, artists or faculty.

"Within the first 4 months alone, we had the pleasure of welcoming here international guests and faculty from Austria, California, Russia and Denver". We began this term by welcoming to our faculty a renowned computer animation artist from Poland and a Romanian life drawing artist.

Within the next three months we shall also be visited by famed animation historians from Italy and Canada. For the following term we hope to welcome a famed experimental and stop motion animator from Estonia. This varied exposure results in contrasting, thought provoking and imagination inspiring exchanges so essential to evolution of any art form.

Future monthly meetings will include appearances by Italy's Giannalberto Bendazzi and Poland's famed animator Zbigniew Dowgiello, as well as an appearance by Chris Robinson, Executive Director of the Ottawa International Animation Festival. Most recently on February 1, Giannalberto Bendazzi presented and discussed a program on Italian animation. Rocky Mountain College of Art & Design, founded in 1963, is a four-year college providing students with a foundation in traditional and contemporary art and design studies. With an average enrollment of 400 students, RMCAD provides a friendly, highly charged atmosphere with a great deal of one-on-one interaction between students and faculty members. Degree programs include Animation, Graphic Design & Interactive Media, Illustration, Interior Design, Painting & Drawing and Sculpture.

For More Information Please Contact:
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2nd Annual FILM INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE & EXPOSITION (FILMIT) MOVES TO NEW VENUE IN 2001

EVENT TO FOCUS ON THE CONVERGENCE OF TECHNOLOGY AND THE BUSINESS OF FILMMAKING

LOS ANGELES – January 19, 2001- The 2nd Annual Film Information Technology Conference & Exposition (FilmIT) announced today that the conference will take place on October 18 & 19, 2001, and will move to the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles. Over 1,200 senior level technology and film professionals attended last year's inaugural conference (held on October 26 & 27, 2000, at the Sheraton Universal Hotel, Los Angeles), which included insights from keynote speakers Robert M. Cooper, CEO of Landmark Entertainment, and Will Poole, V.P. of Microsoft's Digital Media Division, as well as top-level executive panelists from major studios and IT companies.

FilmIT will continue to focus on the convergence of technology, the Internet, and the business of filmmaking. "In 2001, the studio system and film community will grapple with digital production & distribution advances, Internet marketing challenges, copyright protection concerns, a potentially volatile stock market, mega-media mergers, and Guild & labor issues. And FilmIT will be there to address them all –as the Film Industry's only targeted technology conference," asserts John Aymar, Vice President, Show Director of ISG INC, FilmIT Show Management. In addition to the program's focus, FilmIT will remain an intimate and exclusive business platform. Aymar continues, "Because the conference will offer business solutions no matter which direction the film industry takes, the demand for FilmIT is greater than ever. However, FilmIT will remain limited in conference seating, speaker positions, and exhibit space in order for film professionals to have access to top level speakers, leading IT companies as well as providing networking opportunities among a refined and qualified audience".

Highlights from FilmIT 2000 included Keynote Presenter Robert M. Cooper, a seasoned Hollywood executive and creator of content, and Keynote Presenter Will Poole, Microsoft's Vice President, Digital Media Division, who offered his perspective of convergence as an IT executive. Cooper and Poole kicked off the 2000 conference program, in which 90 executive level speakers addressed content creation, marketing, asset management, content distribution, Major and Independent Studio strategy, and the Internet within 25 in-depth sessions. Conference Speakers included: Paul Jacques, CIO–American Film Institute; Jerry Pierce, SVP of Technology-Universal Pictures; Garret Chau, Agent, New Media Division -United Talent Agency; Ira Rubenstein, VP-Sony Pictures Digital Entertainment; Brad Hunt, CTO–MPAA; Stephanie Allen, SVP New Media-20th Century Fox Searchlight; Scott Ross, CEO-Digital Domain; Mark Litwak, Chairman-Reelplay.com; Jonathan Taplin, President & CEO-Intertainer; Peggy Miles, President & CEO-Intervox Communications; Jeremy Bernard, CEO-Hypnotic; Ken Williams, CEO-Stan Lee Media; and Lance Trebesch, GM-Viant/LA.

For more information about FilmIT, visit the event website at www.filmitevent.com or contact:
Dana Knox, Marketing Director, / Phone: 203.254.7998 / Email: dknox@instinctsg.com

JEFF LOTMAN PRE-WAR ANIMATION ART COLLECTION TO BE SOLD ONLINE AT SOTHEBYS.COM STARTING APRIL 13

Auction Features Original Disney Artwork Privately Purchased from Early Animation Artists

Even as a young teen 25 years ago in suburban Philadelphia, Jeff Lotman had a bit of stardust in his eyes. He was lucky enough to be attending a school that offered a course in 'Animation,' and he quickly became intrigued by the whole cinematic process. From start to finish, Jeff and his classmates at the William Penn Charter School learned the various steps that went into creating an animated film, but little did Jeff know that this fundamental training would lay the groundwork for his future understanding of animation art as a collectible category -- one in which he would eventually become recognized as an international authority.

Approximately 325 lots of animation drawings, layout drawings, cels with production backgrounds and water color production backgrounds from such Disney classics as Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Fantasia, The Band Concert, Dumbo, Pinocchio, The Jungle Book and others will be included in the Internet sale.

Considered to be among the most exceptional lots are a 1935 cel applied to its original production background of conductor Mickey Mouse from The Band Concert (estimate $200/300,000), and a spectacular cel of Snow White in front of the dwarves' cottage (est. $75/100,000) from Disney's first full-length animated film, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Other highlights include both a detailed scene of Gepetto's toy workshop (est. $15/20,000) and image of Jiminy Cricket on the scroll of a violin (est. $9/12,000) from Pinocchio. Also, there are many significant colored charcoal storyboards from Fantasia, with classic scenes of waltzing flowers, fairies and centaurettes.

Part I of the Jeff Lotman Animation Art Collection will be sold online at www.sothebys.com from April 13 through May 4. Part II will run from May 11 to June 1. For further information, tel. Dana Hawkes at 212-606-7910 or E-mail Dana.Hawkes@sothebys.com.

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